

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace Paragraphs [0002], [0017], [0033], and [0048] with the following amended paragraphs.

A1 [0002] Threaded mechanical connectors are well known in the art and are often used at a junction to connect components of various systems such as gas lines within a pneumatic system, wires within an electrical system, fluid lines within a fluid system, or fibers within an optical system, among others. In such systems, the threaded mechanical connector often comprises a locking ring that secures a first component to a second component. Generally, the locking ring has internal threads and is rotatably mounted to the first component. Further, the first component is adapted to mate with a second component, i.e., a plug housing adapted to mate ~~mated~~ with a socket housing, and once the first component is mated with the second component, the locking ring is rotated such that the internal threads of the locking ring engage external threads on the second component. Accordingly, the first and second components are mated together, and the locking ring is rotated such that a connection is achieved as the internal threads of the locking ring successively engage the external threads of the second component.

A2 [0017] Figure ~~[[5]]~~ 5b is a partial side cross sectional view, taken along the plane of A-A of Figure 1, of ~~an embodiment of a locking ring, shown engaging a housing,~~ a thread engagement member engaging a second threaded portion of a housing according to the principles of the present invention;

A3 [0033] Referring now to ~~Figure 5~~ Figures 5a and 5b, the locking ring 16 is shown engaged with the housing 14 and is rotated such that the thread engagement

member 22 engages the first threaded portion 18 (Figure 5a) and then successively engages the second threaded portion 20 (Figure 5b) as the locking ring 16 travels along a length A of the housing 14. Since the first threaded portion 18 comprises a coarser pitch than the second threaded portion 20, the locking ring 16 engages the housing 14 with a relatively small rotation of the locking ring 16. Therefore, relatively small rotations of the locking ring 16 results in a relatively large amount of axial travel along length A of the housing 14. As the thread engagement member 22 transitions into the second threaded portion 20, the locking ring 16 engages the housing 14 with a relatively large rotation of the locking ring 16, wherein relatively large rotations of the locking ring 16 results in a relatively small amount of axial travel along length A of the housing 14. Accordingly, the thread engagement member 22 engages the first threaded portion 18 and the second threaded portion 20 to secure the locking ring 16 to the housing 14 with a varying amount of axial travel per rotation of the locking ring 16 that corresponds with the pitches of the first threaded portion 18 and the second threaded portion 20. As a result, the connector 10 is relatively simple to engage and operate through the first threaded portion 18 and further provides a robust and reliable connection through the second threaded portion 20.

[0048] As further shown in Figure 10b, the multiple threaded portions 37, 39, and 41 may be internal to the second component 33 rather than external as previously described. Accordingly, the thread engagement member 35 is external to the first component 31 as shown, rather than internal as previously described. As a result, the thread engagement member 35 external to the first component 31 engages the multiple threaded portions 37, 39, and 41 internal to the second component 33 to

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secure the first component 31 to the second component 33 with a varying amount of axial travel per rotation of the first component 31 that corresponds with the pitches of the multiple threaded portions. Further, although the threaded portions 37, 39, and 41 as shown comprise successively finer pitches, other combinations of finer and/or coarser pitches may also be employed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention.

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0016]:

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[0016.1] Figure 5a is a partial side cross sectional view of an engagement member engaging a first threaded portion of a housing according to the principles of the present invention;
